

Conservatorium of Music

Virtuosity in Piano Works of Franz Liszt

in the Weimar Period:

The Final Versions of Transcendental and Paganini Studies

by

Seon Jeong Kang

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I. INTRODUCTION

Regardless of many styles, ideas, and trends in the history of music, which have existed so far, only some composers and performers have been known world-wide and will continue to be recognized by future generations. Franz Liszt is one of them and one of the representative musicians, both as a pianist and a composer, of the Romantic Era.

Liszt was a true romantic. Liszt's music resembles his romantic and dramatic life¹ and he was the most distinguished virtuoso pianist in the Romantic Era, as a composer, he left many virtuosic works, especially for piano solo. There is no doubt that hundreds of his piano compositions were written so that he could give performances by himself. Liszt was the incomparable virtuoso of his time and is still regarded as a legend. However, not all his compositions exhibit technically amazing or stunning showmanship as some critics would claim about his music. His works for solo piano include lyrical pieces with his own particular style or in styles influenced by Chopin and other contemporaries.² He developed a rich harmonic vocabulary, which was called for in his religious works as well as in other works.

This thesis will examine Liszt's virtuosity focusing on selected compositions written during his Weimar period, which make him the greatest master of piano music in the

¹ John Gillespie, *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music: An Historical Survey of Music for Harpsichord and Piano* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publish Co., 1965), 237.

² John Ogdon, "The Romantic Tradition." in *Keyboard Music*, ed. Denis Matthews (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972).

Romantic Era, and, which remain even today, a controversial topic. It will begin with an examination of the piano itself and virtuosity in the nineteenth century, in order to provide a historical context for Liszt and his keyboard technique. It will then move on to discuss Liszt's musicality and the background to his compositions. Finally, this thesis will draw upon the information about Liszt's musical virtuosity and the historical development of new piano techniques through analysis of key pieces from Liszt's Weimar period. These pieces are the third version of *Transcendental Etudes No. 10 Allegro agitato molto* as studies; the second version of *La Campanella*, Paganini Etudes No. 2 as studies and transcriptions. These pieces will be analysed firstly, to show that Liszt's virtuosity and command of technique were unique and secondly that he was successful in expressing the sound and texture of orchestral music through the medium of the piano, which was one of his chief ambitions.

II. THE VIRTUOSITY AND THE PIANO IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1. Virtuosity

First of all, it is important to know about the musical features, trends and virtuosity of the nineteenth century. The aesthetic viewpoint of Romanticism placed emphasis on the expression of the artists' own feelings and emotions.³ Since the eighteenth century, public performance has become more popular among musicians and they have placed more value and effort on performance than on composition. The concert however, also required uniqueness and virtuosity from musicians, as they sought to impress their audiences and maintain their reputations. Therefore, much technically challenging and virtuosic music was composed with the intention of conveying deep emotional expression to audience. Famous items selected from opera and popular lieder were transcribed for solo piano, some of these being simple and others being very elaborate and virtuosic. Since highly advanced technical skills became an important element of playing, musicians paid attention to piano teaching method and performance technique. A well-known collection of studies entitled *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1817-1820) by Clementi and many studies for the improvement of technique composed by Czerny and other contemporaries were the fruit of this period.⁴ Also, many studies which were actually concert pieces were continuously introduced by Chopin and Liszt. In particular, the

³ Frank Eugene Kirby, *A Short History of Keyboard Music* (New York: The Free Press, 1966), 299.

⁴ Ibid., 299-301.

virtuosity of Liszt was reported as “not an outgrowth, but an indispensable element of music.”⁵

2. Development of the Pianoforte

The pianoforte has been developed since Cristofori's first model was invented in 1709. Particularly in the first half of nineteenth century, there were several developments in the construction of the pianoforte, including Broadwood's iron wire, Babcock's metal-frame piano (1825) and Pape's felt hammers (1826) and these inventions led to the development of a range of new technical and expressive possibilities. Liszt, in particular, was inspired by Erard's 'double-escapement mechanism', invented in 1821. The 'double-escapement mechanism' <Fig. 1> allowed the hammer of a piano to quickly return to the string when a note was repeated.⁶

This made it possible to have quicker and subtler note repetitions, and produced a more rapid sound, thus facilitating the spread of virtuosity in the nineteenth century by virtuosos such as Thalberg and Liszt. The possibilities for virtuosity opened up by the 'double-escapement mechanism' inspired Liszt to compose and perform his *Transcendental Etudes*.⁷ These Etudes contain fast passages, impressively showy and

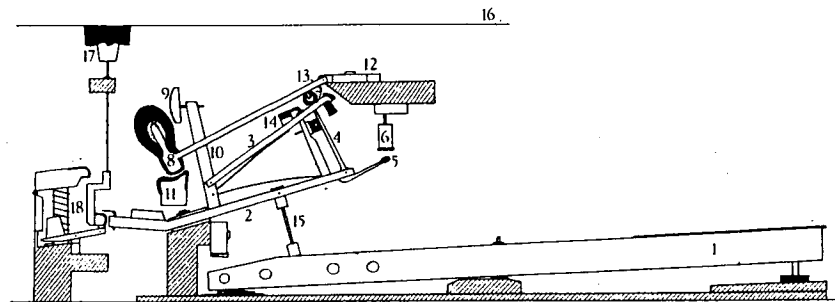
⁵ Owen Jander, "Virtuoso." in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second Edition, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Inc., 2001), vol.26, 789.

⁶ Kim Yong Hwan, "The Development of Piano Manufacture Technique and the Influence," *Music and Korea*, Winter 2003, 365-392, available from <<http://www.musicology.co.kr>>(accessed 25 September 2005).

⁷ Gillespie, 13.

rapid fingering, and require the pianist to have a high standard of practical experience and performance technique.<Ex. 1> Thus, the development of the piano was influenced by performance technique, and the performers needed more advanced techniques as new piano mechanism appeared and as audience expectations increased.

<Fig. 1> Erard's double escapement action of 1822⁸



- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1 Key | 11 Hammer rest |
| 2 Intermediate lever | 12 Hammer rail |
| 3 Repetition lever | 13 "T" of the double-escapement |
| 4 Hopper or escapement | 14 Screw to regulate the double-escapement |
| 5 Hopper spur | 15 Screw to regulate the arc described by the hammer |
| 6 Escapement button | 16 String |
| 7 Hammer butt | 17 Damper |
| 8 Hammer head | 18 Pedal spring |
| 9 Check | |
| 10 Shank of hammer check | |

⁸ Ernest Closson. *History of the Piano*. Edited and revised by Robin Golding (London: Elek Books Ltd., 1974), 136.

<Ex. 1>

a. *Transcendental Etudes No. 4, "Mazeppa"* (1851) mm. 82 - 84



b. *Transcendental Etudes No. 5, "Feux follets"* (1851) mm. 32 - 34



3. Piano technique

Until Liszt's time, the pure finger action was normally required for keyboard technique.

<Ex. 2> This technique upholds the classical keyboard technique for performance on the clavichord and the harpsichord. In principle this technique aims to minimize movement

of the hands and to play the keyboard only with fingers and wrists.⁹ A number of composers such as Muzio Clementi (1752-1837), Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858), Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1857) Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1785-1849) and Carl Czerny (1791-1857) contributed to establish this technique.¹⁰

<Ex. 2>

a. Muzio Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum: Ex. 68.* (1817-1820) mm. 1 - 4

Ex. 68.

b. Czerny's *School of the Virtuoso, Op. 365.* mm. 1 - 3

29.

Allegro. (♩ = 92.) Play each repeat 12 times.

⁹ Song Jeong Ee, *Piano Playing and Teaching* (Seoul: Eumag Chunchu Publishing Co., 1986), 65.

¹⁰ Gillespie, 248-256, ; Kirby, 301.

The evolution of the piano, which led to its greater strength, bigger sound and wider dynamic range, allowed a richer variety of pianistic textures.¹¹ Therefore, new techniques were required. In the early nineteenth century, a number of great composers such as Chopin, Schumann, Mendelssohn were born. The foundations of piano technique were laid by these pioneers whose studies are still essential today.¹² Liszt did more to develop piano technique than any of his predecessors or contemporaries, with the possible exception of his teacher Carl Czerny.¹³ The contribution of Chopin is also considered vital for the establishment of the new piano technique especially with the extreme pianism to be found in his etudes. However, Liszt's contribution to the development of piano technique is immense.

Liszt's compositions abound in the more obvious technical devices, such as octave passages or scales in thirds. His devices are used to emphasize melodic line, to accompany melody or simply to add bravura. <Ex. 3> Chromatic progressions by octaves and massive chords appear prominently along with trills, double trills, and all kinds of ornamentation.¹⁴ Also, in order to achieve an orchestral sound from the piano, Liszt expanded the range of dynamics and there was no restriction to the use of arms and even body. Liszt opened up the modern piano technique through his unique technique, which was to relax the shoulders, to place the hands quite far from the keyboard and to allow

¹¹ Alan Walker, "Liszt, Franz." in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second Edition, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Inc., 2001), vol.14, 765.

¹² Peter Cooper, *Style in Piano Playing* (London: John Calder Ltd., 1975), 126.

¹³ Gillespie, 238. ; The studies by Czerny are still regarded as one of the important method to achieve keyboard technique.

¹⁴ Ibid.

the arms to remain flexible.¹⁵ It is a completely different technique from “the fetters of the quiet hand, stiff finger school.”¹⁶

<Ex. 3>

a. *Valse de l'opéra Faust de Gounod* (1861) mm. 381 - 386



b. *Grandes Études de Paganini No. 6, Var. 6* (1851) mm. 1 - 4

VAR. VI.

¹⁵ Park Young Soo, *The Great Pianists and Their Technique* (Jaesoon Publishing Co., 1995), 259.

¹⁶ Reginald R. Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique* (Washington: Robert B. Luce, Inc., 1974), 180.

c. Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 (1847) mm. 82 - 84

The image displays a musical score for the third movement of Franz Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, specifically measures 82 through 84. The score is written for piano and is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 82-84) features a treble and bass staff. The right hand (r.h.) plays a series of chords and single notes, while the left hand (l.h.) plays a rapid, ascending scale. The tempo is marked 'accelerando'. The second system (measures 85-86) shows the right hand playing a series of chords, with the left hand playing a rapid, ascending scale. The tempo is marked 'cresc. molto', 'rinforzando', and 'diminuendo molto'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Handwritten annotations and markings include:

- sf* (sforzando)
- l.h.* (left hand)
- r.h.* (right hand)
- accelerando*
- octave ad lib.*
- cresc. molto*
- rinforzando*
- diminuendo molto*
- Ad.* (Ad libitum)
- ** (mark)

III. FRANZ LISZT

Franz Liszt was born in Raiding, Hungary. Liszt's father Adam Liszt was a clerk of Prince Esterhazy and an amateur cellist. Adam gave his son Franz the first piano lessons. Franz gave his first public performance at the age of nine and this gifted young child had financial support from Counts Amaden and Zapary for his further study. The Liszt family moved to Vienna in 1821. Adam looked for the best teachers for his son and eventually Franz studied piano with Czerny and composition with Salieri. By the following year he had already mastered keyboard technique and had given his first concert. He also had the chance to publish his first composition, as one of the fifty variations on a theme of Diabelli commissioned by the composer, who was also the publisher.<Ex. 4>

<Ex. 4> *Variation on a waltz by Diabelli* (1822)

a. The original theme, mm. 1 - 16

Vivace

The musical score is for the first system of the original theme, measures 1 through 16. It is written for piano and is in 3/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Vivace'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1-8, and the second system contains measures 9-16. The music is characterized by a mix of treble and bass clefs. Dynamics include piano (p), forte (f), and sforzando (sf). The melody is primarily in the right hand, with a supporting bass line in the left hand.

b. Liszt's variation (Variation 24 from Diabelli's "Patriotic Antnthyology") mm. 1 - 16

Allegro

The musical score is for Variation 24 from Diabelli's "Patriotic Anthology" by Franz Liszt, measures 1-16. It is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The tempo is marked "Allegro". The score is written for piano with a treble and bass staff. The dynamics are marked as follows: *f* (forte) at measure 1, *p* (piano) at measure 5, *cresc.* (crescendo) at measure 6, *f* at measure 7, *p* at measure 8, *f* at measure 9, *p* at measure 11, *f* at measure 12, *cresc.* at measure 13, and *S* (Scherzo) at measure 14. The score ends at measure 16.

The Liszt family moved to Paris in 1823 and until 1827, before Adam's death, Franz travelled Europe as a concert pianist. During the tour he also composed some music such as variations or bravuras, which showed off his brilliant technique. But the compositions in this period are hardly performed or even mentioned because most of them focus on finger movement reminiscent of Czerny exercises so that adolescent Liszt could show off his prodigious piano technique.<Ex. 5> For a few years after Adam Liszt's death, Franz Liszt was not active as a performer or composer; instead, he taught pupils and

strengthened his mind by becoming absorbed in literature, such as the writings of Sainte-Beuve, Hugo and Balzac.

<Ex. 5> *Allegro di bravura* (1824) mm. 8 - 19



Living in Paris, which was a cultural centre at that time, greatly affected Liszt. He became acquainted with many musicians, writers and poets, including Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), Frederic Chopin (1810-1849), Alkan (Charles Henri Valentin Morhange, 1813-1888), Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869), Victor Hugo (1802-1885), Heinrich Heine (1797-1856). The most important musicians who influenced Liszt were Nicolo Paganini (1782-1840), Berlioz and Chopin. In particular, Paganini gave the young Liszt desire to be "Paganini of the piano" and Liszt became so. Even Liszt influenced the course of musical history more than Paganini had done. Liszt's masterpieces, the Transcendental Etudes and Paganini Etudes are strongly inspired by Paganini and his virtuosity. Although the first version of the Transcendental Etudes were already

composed before Liszt heard of Paganini. Liszt revised them to very virtuosic. But they were nearly unplayable at that time. Many of the virtuosic passages which predominate in his works date from that period.

Liszt spent the years from 1839 to 1847 as an active concert pianist. Even though he was very busy to travel over the Europe to give performances, "the king of the piano" did not stop to compose and he made sketches of the works which were to be completed later and wrote many transcriptions, mainly fantasias based on operatic works. Unfortunately, most of them have been forgotten.¹⁷ Because they were mostly to show off his brilliant pianism. Meanwhile, he became to be concerned about Hungarian music and gypsy music, his native country in this period, he left *Ungarische Nationalmelodien* and though he did not complete in that time, but he began to write *Hungarian Rhapsodies*.

However, in the beginning of the "Ganzzeit", Liszt brought sensational innovation in the performance stage. Until his time, the music concerts were usually given by a number of performers, who play with music. But his magnetic personality and dynamic pianism established the precedent of the solo performer in a way that has not been emulated since.¹⁸ In 1840 at a London concert, Liszt appeared himself alone in the concert, without music. That was the first time to use this term "recital" by Liszt himself. He became an innovator of stage manner as the first performer to play entirely from memory and to make solo repertoire in a concert.

¹⁷ Gillespie, 237-8.

¹⁸ Cooper, 41.

Liszt gave his last recital in Elizabetgrad in 1847 at the zenith of his fame. He continued to give performances after the official retirement but he did not accept payment for them.¹⁹ He settled down in Weimar and worked as a musical director and a conductor. He did not need to travel everywhere, so he could focus on producing music. Liszt left many of master pieces in this period. In 1861, Liszt became Abbé Liszt. Since he took minor orders, he merely worked as a musician. But after 1869 until his death in 1886, he came back to the music career, and continued to teach and compose. The works in this period are mostly religious and pre-Impressionism character pieces, which are simple and the musical depth are preferred than virtuosity.

¹⁹ Kirby, 302.

IV. LISZT'S PIANO MUSIC

Liszt composed about four hundred pieces of piano solo music including original works and arrangements. These works can be divided into three parts; first, technical and demanding virtuosic works, second, lyrical and harmonic character pieces, and third, arrangements such as paraphrases, operatic and instrumental transcriptions. <Ex. 6>

<Ex. 6>

a. *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* (1859-60) mm. 1 - 29

Allegro vivace (quasi presto)

mf

f marcato

p

b. *Consolations No. 2. Un poco più mosso* (1849-50) mm. 1 - 9

Un poco più mosso

cantando espressivo
p
smorz.

c. Schumann's *Widmung* transcribed by Liszt (1848) mm. 3 - 8

accentuato assai il canto
Du mei-ne See - le, du mein Herz, du meine Won - ne, du mein
Schmerz, du meine Welt, in der ich le - be, mein Him - mel

accentuato assai il canto
p
smorz.

The virtuosic music made Liszt the greatest virtuoso of the era. His character pieces influenced the music of the next generations, and numerous transcriptions were also an important part of his career. In order to examine Liszt's virtuosity, the *Transcendental*

Etudes as representative virtuosic works and the *Paganini Etudes*, some of his important compositions, will be discussed in this exegesis.

1. Liszt's Musical Background

When the Liszt family arrived in Vienna in 1821, Czerny was only thirty years old, but already a well-known pianist, a pupil of Beethoven and a famous teacher. Adam Liszt chose this musician as his son's teacher. Franz was a child prodigy but Czerny made him a disciplined pianist.²⁰ Franz Liszt learned from Czerny only for eighteen months, but Czerny's contribution to drill Liszt to master the piano technique was enormous. He became an incomparable virtuoso in that period and left a great deal of technically demanding pieces for the piano. In particular his early works show Czerny's influence.

Liszt moved to Paris in 1823, because Adam was concerned about his son's composition study.²¹ In Paris, Franz met important figures in his life and career - Paganini, Berlioz and Chopin.

Paganini was the foremost virtuoso in the Romantic Era. Liszt heard Paganini for the first time in 1831. Paganini's "technical wizardry on the violin" motivated Liszt to develop the piano technique.²² In fact, respect for Paganini came from a number of musicians of that era: not only Liszt, but also Mendelssohn, Chopin, Schumann and so

²⁰ Alan Walker, ed., "Liszt's Musical Background." In *Franz Liszt: the Man and His Music* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1970), 37.

²¹ Ibid., 40.

²² Gerig, 172.

on.²³ Liszt was the most outstanding composer who succeeded in transferring Paganini's virtuosity into his piano music.

Berlioz's impressive orchestral works inspired Liszt to make arrangements. Particularly the success of Liszt's arrangement of *Symphonie Fantastique* by Berlioz (1833) led Liszt to compose piano arrangements from orchestral works.²⁴ Liszt's music often had programmatic titles, especially in French, such as *Années de Pèlerinage*, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*. This fact shows a strong strain of French literary Romanticism, with its ideal of the program music of Berlioz.²⁵

Liszt met Berlioz and Chopin in 1833. He formed a friendship with Chopin, and his observation of Chopin's playing brought more Romanticism into his own playing. Chopin was entirely the opposite to Liszt but the influence of Chopin on Liszt was huge.²⁶ Chopin's elements of pianism, such as his poeticism, lyricism, harmonic innovations and rubato technique, affected Liszt's music.²⁷ Liszt wrote a number of works inspired by Chopin - two Ballades, two Polonaises, a Berceuse in two different versions, a Mazurka Brillante, and a few shorter works such as his earlier Waltzes.²⁸

²³ Harold Day, ed., *Secret Life of Paganini: Journals and Jottings etc.* (Hobart: Hobart Press, 2002), v.

²⁴ Carl F. Weizmann. *A History of Pianoforte-playing and Pianoforte-literature* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 183.

²⁵ Donald J. Grout and Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*. 6th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2001), 582.

²⁶ Sitwell, 24.

²⁷ Grout, 582.

²⁸ Humphrey Searle. *The Music of Franz Liszt*. 2nd ed. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966), 56.

2. General musical features

As mentioned in the section above, Liszt was an eclectic artist.²⁹ He accepted the styles and ideas of Paganini, Berlioz, Chopin and the idea of extra-musical element, French literature. However, Liszt was born for the piano and his aim was to introduce the orchestra into the piano. Liszt said;

“My piano is to me what his boat is to the seaman, what his horse is to the Arab: nay even more, it has been till now my eyes, my speech, my life. . . . I hold the piano very high. In my view it takes the first place in the hierarchy of instruments. . . . In the circumference of its seven octaves it embraces the whole circumference of an orchestra; and a man’s ten fingers are enough to render the harmonies which in an orchestra are only brought out by the combination of hundreds of musicians. . . .”³⁰

By transferring orchestral idioms to the piano, Liszt freed the role of the pianoforte. For example, tremolos and chromatic scales in the low register are to express orchestral(string) colouring.<Ex. 7>

<Ex. 7> *Ballade No. 2* (1853) mm. 1-4

Allegro moderato

sempre legato
col Ped.
marcato

²⁹ Grout, loc.cit.

³⁰ Oscar Bie. *A History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players*, Translated by Ernest E. Kellert and Edward W. Naylor. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), 281-2.

In classic piano music, piano music can be regarded as “dualistic” music, consisting of roles played by the right and the left hands. But Liszt wanted an orchestral sound, so the piano music required another element, that is the intermediate part between the song and the bass parts.³¹ The intermediate part appears across wide range in left-hand passage or passages shared by both hands.<Ex. 8>

<Ex. 8> *Transcendental Etudes No. 4, “Mazeppa”* (1851) mm. 8 - 11

Allegro. (M. M. ♩ = 112-116)

sempre fortissimo e con strepito

The musical score for Liszt's *Transcendental Etude No. 4, "Mazeppa"*, measures 8-11, is presented in a multi-staff format. The tempo is marked **Allegro** with a metronome range of 112-116. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The score is characterized by a complex texture with multiple staves. The top staff, in treble clef, contains chords and melodic fragments. The middle staves, in grand staff (treble and bass clefs), feature dense, rapid sixteenth-note passages in both hands, marked *sempre fortissimo e con strepito*. The bottom staff, in bass clef, contains chords and melodic fragments. The score includes various musical notations such as *m.s.*, *m.d.*, and *simile*.

Liszt had some physical advantage as a pianist; his hands were long and narrow; there was a lack of webbing between the fingers, and he also possessed unusually long and

³¹ Camille Saint-Saens. “Liszt, the Pianist.” Translated by Fred Rothwell. *The Musical Times*, Vol. 62, No. 943 (September 1, 1921), 623. available from <<http://www.jstor.org>> (accessed 28 September 2005).

However, sometimes we find that Liszt's passage-work is easier to perform than Chopin's works or the works of other composers, even though it may sound more difficult. That is because of the symmetry of Liszt's ornamentation.³² Liszt was a well-displined pianist, and he also had a certain sense of the "topography" of the piano. Liszt understood the performance technique while the musical process is considered. Therefore the passages that seem difficult, can be play with economic fingerings; for instance, in a cadenza-like passage in his Ballade No.2.<Ex. 9> many passages can be played more easily without many difficulties, once the pianist has become familiar with the fingering.

2 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1

delicatamente

22

Because Liszt composed such a vast amount of music, the quality of the compositions is often uneven.³³ This has led to criticism that Liszt could not compose consistently to a high standard. However, the same could be said of other composers with a very large output of compositions. The problem was made worse for Liszt due to his alternative career as concert pianist, which required him to travel extensively and did not allow him as much time to compose as he might have wished. Therefore, Liszt's role as a concert performer and pianist had a great impact on his compositional work- firstly, it allowed him to write extremely difficult and technically demanding music which he could still performed with relative ease; and secondly the consistency and quality of his output was affected by the effort of touring Europe to perform piano concerts, as well as the reduced amount of time he was able to use for composing while on tour.

3. Works of the Weimar Years

In middle age, 1848, the great pianist retired from the public concert stage and settled in Weimar as Court Kapellmeister. While he held this position, from 1848 to 1861, Liszt wrote most of the compositions that established his reputation as a major composer - not only the chief piano works such as sonatas, revisions of earlier pieces and transcriptions, but symphonic poems, songs and so on. Because he did not give as many as performance in previous years, he came to compose more mature music rather than technically demanding music.

³³ Gillespie, 239.

a. Transcendental Etudes

Liszt's studies are considered as the most important compositions among his whole repertoires. Because they portrait the "picture of Liszt's pianistic personality in seed, in growth and finally in self-clarification."³⁴ Liszt also put these etudes on the head on his autograph catalogue. They are composed and revised from Liszt childhood to manhood, 1826 to 1863 and there are several sets of studies: *Twelve Transcendental Etudes* have three versions of 1826, 1838, and 1851, *Six Paganini Etudes*, which have 1838 and 1851 versions, *Trois Études de Concert* (1848), *Ab Irato* (1852), and *Two Concert Studies* (1862-3).

The *Transcendental Etudes* exist in three versions but the last version is the one that usually used for performance. Generally the degree of difficulty is increase in each version. Liszt's virtuosity - its extremes and varieties, the most difficult elements of his piano technique are contained in these etudes.³⁵ And each piece contains various technical exercises, not like general studies composed by other composers. <Ex. 10> But, not all studies attached weight to "virtuosity", there are romantic and lyrical pieces such as *Paysage*, *Ricordanza*, *Harmonies du soir*.

³⁴ Ferruccio Busoni. *The Essence of Music and Other Papers*. Translated by Rosamond Ley (London: The Rockliff Publishing Corporation, 1957), 154.

³⁵ Kirby, 304.

<Ex. 10> Chopin's *Piano Etude Op. 25, No. 10* (1829-36) mm. 9 – 13

The first version is a Czerny-like exercise; the second version became more virtuosic; and the third version's studies are musically more mature and most of them have programmatic titles. <Ex. 11>

<Ex. 11>

a. The original version of Liszt's *Transcendental Etude No. 10* (1826) mm. 1 - 9

b. The second version in '24 Grand Etudes' (1838) mm. 1 - 9

Presto molto agitato.

p *egualmente* *appassionato*

sempre più cresc. ed agitato

c. The final version (1851) mm. 1 - 6

Allegro agitato molto. (♩ = 104)

p *ten.* *ten.*

The first version of the Transcendental studies was *Étude en 48 exercices dans tous les tons majeurs et mineurs* composed in 1826, when Liszt was fifteen years old. Liszt intended to write pieces in every major and minor keys like Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* but only twelve studies were written.³⁶ This harmonic order is retained in the later versions, which consist of descending circle of fifth and each of their minors, leaving the circle half finished.³⁷ <Fig. 2>

<Fig. 2> The harmonic order

1	Preludio	C major
2	Untitled, Molto vivace	A minor
3	Paysage	F major
4	Mazeppa	D minor
5	Feux Follets	B major
6	Vision	G minor
7	Eroica	E-flat major
8	Wild Jagd	C minor
9	Ricordanza	A-flat major
10	Untitled, Allegro agitato molto	F minor
11	Harmonies du soir	D-flat major
12	Chasse-Neige	B-flat minor

Liszt wanted to create for the piano the same kind of diabolic, virtuosic effects that Paganini had done for the violin after he has been impressed by Paganini's concert in 1831. Several years later he revised his early etudes which were like fingering exercises in 1838, and he also composed the first versions of Paganini. The *24 Grandes Études*, the first version of the *Transcendental Etudes* consists of only twelve pieces, originally from the former version. But they were considerably revised, which were regarded as

³⁶ Searle, 14.

³⁷ Louis Kentner. "Solo Piano Music (1827-61)." in Franz Liszt: the Man and His Music. Ed. Alan Walker (New York: Taplinger, 1970), 105.

unplayable music because of its difficulty and complexity. Berlioz wrote about this music, “Unfortunately one cannot hope to hear music of this kind often; Liszt created it for himself, and no one else in this world could flatter himself that he could approach being able to perform it.”³⁸

The 1830s to the 1840s were a period of great virtuosity for Liszt. There is no doubt that the *24 Grandes Études*, though made up by twelve pieces, are more virtuosic and more technically demanding. However, it was so virtuosic and demanding that only Liszt himself was considered capable of performing it satisfactorily at the time. So Liszt realised the extreme technical difficulty of these pieces, therefore he revised again, lastly in 1851, thus reducing their technical difficulty. However, it does not mean that the pieces are simply easier to play. According to Busoni’s opinion, the improvements in this version are to be found in “a greater ease and smooth playableness and corresponding amount of impressive effect and character.”³⁹

Transcendental Etudes. No.10 F minor is one of dramatic pieces. It is often compared with Chopin’s F minor Study Op.25; no.2 and Beethoven’s Appassionata Sonata. Because musically and emotionally they have something in common.<Ex. 12>

³⁸ Searle, 15.

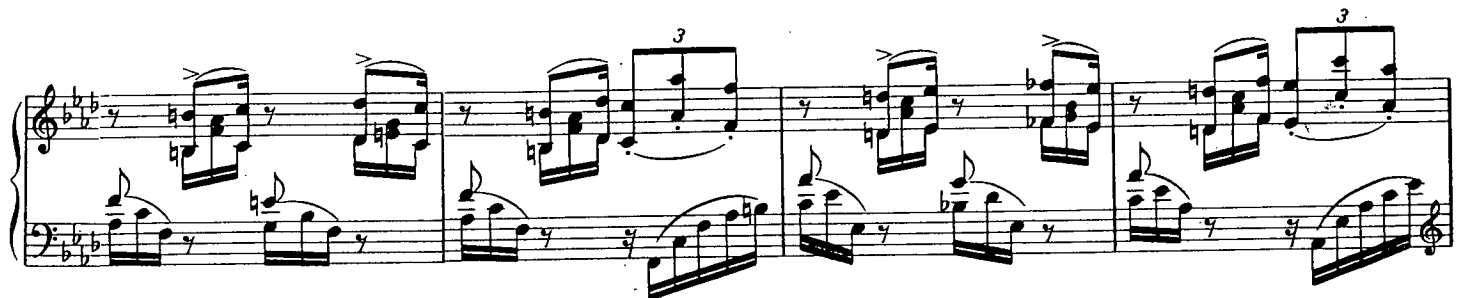
³⁹ Busoni, 161.

<Ex. 12>

a. Chopin's Etude Op. 10, No. 9 mm. 1 - 4



b. Liszt's Transcendental Etude No. 10 mm. 6 - 9



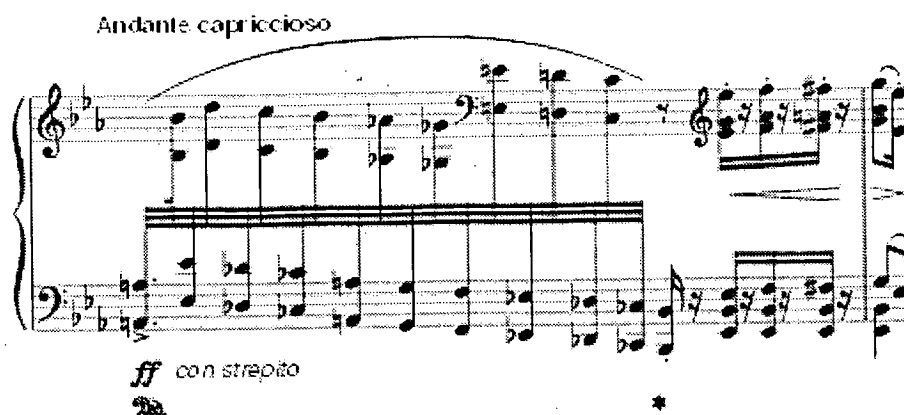
The 'interlocking scales' in the beginning<Ex. 11. c> are one of Liszt's inventive techniques. This technique is also used in simple scale passages and octave ones.<Ex. 13>

<Ex. 13>

a. Paganini Etude, No. 3, *La Campanella* m. 77

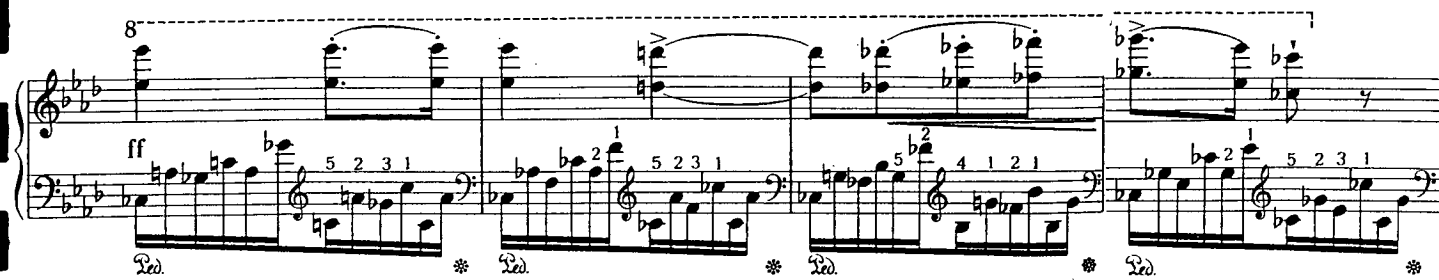


b. Paganini Etude No. 2 m. 62



The low part is made up with broken chords across wide register, meanwhile on the right hand, a lyricism of octave passages is required. <Ex. 14>

<Ex. 14> Transcendental Etude No. 10 mm. 31 – 34



The stringendo dynamics in short or long passages, and sudden-stops are also elements of extreme showing off. <Ex. 15>

<Ex. 15>

a. mm. 141 - 146

Two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system (measures 141-143) features a treble clef with a key signature of three flats and a common time signature. It includes an 8-measure phrase, a 'string.' marking, and a 4-measure phrase. The second system (measures 144-146) includes a 'sf' (sforzando) marking, a 'string.' marking, a 'rinforz.' (rinforzando) marking, and an 8-measure phrase. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

b. mm. 66 - 75

Three systems of musical notation for piano. The first system (measures 66-75) includes a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking and a 'string.' marking. The second system (measures 66-75) includes an '8 simile' marking. The third system (measures 66-75) includes a 'più rinforz.' (più rinforzando) marking, an 'ff' (fortissimo) marking, and an 8-measure phrase. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

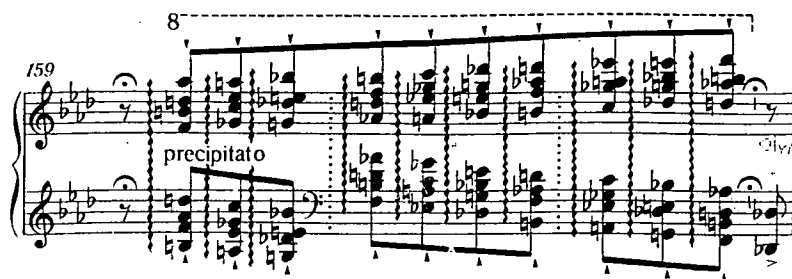
c. m. 77, 135



The wide register and the chord that consists of as many notes as one can play are also from an orchestral idiom. <Ex. 16>

<Ex. 16> mm. 79 – 85, 159





Liszt liked to use the strained, fast and radiant ending. This piece also finishes with *Stretta*. His *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2* also has an exciting *Prestissimo* close.<Ex. 17>

<Ex. 17>

a. The ending of *Transcendental Etude No. 10* mm. 160 - 169

Stretta

164

167

8

8

8

stacc.

b. The ending of *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2* mm. 421 – 448

Prestissimo.

pp martellato
senza D.

cresc.
sempre staccato

più cresc.

ff

ff
**sostenuto*
Presto.

b. Paganini Etudes

Liszt made numerous arrangements for piano from his own and other composers' music such as works for other instruments, songs, orchestral and operatic works. Many of Liszt's transcriptions belong to his early days, because transcription is normally an exercise in virtuosity.⁴⁰ Because of the technical demands of many of his transcriptions, they can be criticized as being "short in musical value."⁴¹ But Liszt wrote arrangements so that he could draw an orchestral effect from the piano, which widened its potential and range of expression.⁴² Liszt also introduced to audiences original works that were transformed by his virtuosity.⁴³

Liszt's piano transcriptions of orchestral works prove that he had an uncanny ability for creating orchestral fabric at the keyboard. On the other hand, technical aspects outshine the musical substance in much of his music. However, Liszt composed transcriptions to display his phenomenal technique and he was very successful.⁴⁴ Liszt transcribed many instrumental works for piano solo: Beethoven's nine symphonies, the major works by Berlioz, overtures by Weber, the organ works of Bach. He made keyboard arrangements of songs by Schubert, Rossini, Schumann and others as well. Liszt's arrangements are no

⁴⁰ Cooper, 165.

⁴¹ Searle, 16.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Grout, 583.

⁴⁴ Gillespie, 238.

mere transcription; there are poetical re-settings, seen through the medium of the piano, also, Liszt's own genre of his virtuosity.⁴⁵

Paganini Etudes outdo the wizardry of the original violin pieces, and today remain essential studies for the pianist.⁴⁶ These are piano transcriptions of Paganini's caprices for solos violin and with the finale of the B minor violin Concert. Even though there is a technical difference between performing violin and piano, but Liszt transferred successfully. The studies display the virtuoso in his element as well as his *Transcendental Etudes*. The first version of the Paganini Etudes (*Études d'exécution transcendante d'après Paganini*) composed in 1838 had a technical problem in performance; they are extremely difficult because the etudes were composed with the inspiration by the virtuoso Paganini. Therefore Liszt revised so that can be performed in 1851. Liszt dedicated the etudes to Clara Schumann.

The third piece of *Grandes Études de Paganini* (the 1851 version), *La campanella* is a fascinating study in shimmering bell effect, like the title, also in the width of the stretches and leaps, the persistent intricacy of the decorative passages.⁴⁷ The repeated notes and chromatique scales by 'interlocking' techniques or even one hand and jumping octaves or chords are the elements of Liszt's virtuosity. The beginning was in light mood but it finishes with a joyous carillon chiming. <Ex. 18>

⁴⁵ Bie, 290.

⁴⁶ Cooper, 165.

⁴⁷ Dale, 194.

<Ex. 18> *La Campanella*

a. mm. 1 – 7

15. *Allegretto* ⁸

p

p *ma sempre ben marcato il tema*

b. The ending

Animato ⁸

molto

ff con fuoco

CONCLUSION

Liszt's virtuosity and talent allowed him to push the boundaries of performance and piano playing. He was responsible for the creation of innovative piano techniques and came up with a unique new format for the piano concert, which focused on a solo performer and which still is the standard for concert performance today.⁴⁸ His virtuosity in music was sometimes criticised as a 'circus show' because of its extremely demanding technique. However, the impact of his music and the legacy of his compositions have meant that his compositions are still popular and are still being performed everywhere. Critics have said that Liszt's compositions and music were technically brilliant and innovative but lacking in depth and musicality. His compositions have been described as examples of "vulgarity, showmanship, charlatanry, and Liszt, as a 'mixture of priest and circus rider.'"⁴⁹

However, when we examine pieces such as the Sonata in B Minor, *Consolations*, and the Dante Sonata; and when we consider the fact that Liszt single-handedly invented the idea of the symphonic poem, it is easy to recognise that Liszt was intellectual and had a profound and deep knowledge of literature and music. He chose to express the inner, more profound essence of his subject matter.⁵⁰ These characteristics mark Liszt out as being a serious composer. Because of Liszt, the piano was developed and refined as an instrument, as he advised piano-makers to alter their instruments to accommodate the

⁴⁸ Gillespie, 238.

⁴⁹ Walker, preface 13 and Sitwell, 2 in *Franz Liszt: the Man and His Music*.

⁵⁰ www.d-vista.com/OTHER/franzliszt.html

demands of his own virtuosity. Liszt treated the piano as an orchestra, allowing it to produce a wide range of sound and expression through this instrument, revolutionising the way that musicians and the public perceived it - thus opening up new musical possibilities for the piano as an instrument. And his career, as a virtuoso, was not just for him to show off himself but to leave to pianists after him useful instructions, the footprints of attained advancement.⁵¹ As Liszt had desired, his work contributed to the future not only of pianists but also of other musicians and his music strongly influenced the twentieth century as well as the late nineteenth century.

⁵¹ Bie, 282.

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